The Pulpit

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching

William G. Pollard:

The Face of Destiny

Walter L. Cook • Negative Thinking

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G. WAYNE GLICK • THE GOSPEL NOT HEARD

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CONTENTS, JUNE 1956

SERMONS AND ADDRESSES

The Face of Destiny.....*William G. Pollard*
The Power of Negative Thinking.....*Walter L. Cook*
Creation Continues.....*Huston Smith* 1
Our Children's Religion.....*Ben M. Herbster* 1
On Being Good Without Trying.....*William H. Hudnut, Jr.* 1

ARTICLES

The Gospel That Is not Heard.....*G. Wayne Glick*
A Doctorate for All.....*Hillyer H. Straton* 1

FEATURES

Among Us 18
Children's Sermon..... 14
In This Issue..... 2
Memo 3
Nota Bene.....17, 23
Poetry .....
Prayer 1
Pulpit Calendar..... 2
Pulpit Patter..... 2
Pulpit Post..... 2

In this Issue —

G. WAYNE GLICK, assistant professor of religion at Franklin and Marshall College, is active on the faculty committee of the Student Christian Movement and formerly taught at Juniata College. A native of Virginia, he was educated at Bridgewater College, Union Theological Seminary in Virginia, Bethany Biblical Seminary and the University of Chicago. As an ordained minister of the Church of the Brethren he has held pastorates in Richmond, Va., and Lombard, Ill., and been assistant minister of Warren Avenue Congregational Church in Chicago.

WILLIAM G. POLLARD, executive director of the Oak Ridge Institute of Nuclear Studies and rector of St. Stephen's Church at Oak Ridge, Tenn., delivered his sermon "The Face of Destiny" before the Chicago Sunday Evening Club recently. The internationally known scientist aroused widespread interest when he became a candidate for Holy Orders in the Episcopal Diocese of Tennessee, leading to his ordination two years ago. His diversity of concerns is indicated not only by his studies in mathematics and philosophy as an undergraduate at the University of Tennessee and those in physics which led to a doctorate at Rice Institute, but in his published articles in journals devoted to philosophy, mathematics, physics and higher education, as well as in the *Christian Scholar,* of whose editorial board he is a member.

WALTER L. COOK is professor of preaching and pastoral relations, and director of student field work at Bangor Theological Seminary. A graduate of Andover Newton Theological Seminary, he was minister of the First Baptist Church in Bangor, Me., until he joined the seminary faculty last fall.

HUSTON SMITH, associate professor of philosophy at Washington University, St. Louis, is the author of *The Purposes of Higher Education,* published last year. Born in China of Methodist missionary parents, he came to this country for his college education—A.B., Central College, Fayette, Mo.; graduate study in philosophy and religion at the University of California, Berkeley; Ph.D., University of Chicago. The excerpted version of his commencement address, first published in the Lindenwood College *Bulletin,* is used by permission.

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WILLIAM H. HUDNUT, JR., minister since 1946 of the Third Presbyterian Church in Rochester, N. Y., is an editorial associate of The Pulpit. A member of the General Council of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., he has served as president of the Westminster Foundation of the State of New York, as vice-chairman of the National Student Committee of the Y.M.C.A., as member of the board of directors of McCormick Seminary and as lecturer on homiletics at McCormick, Colgate Rochester Divinity school and Union Theological Seminary.

HILLYER H. STRATON, pastor of First Baptist Church in Malden, Mass., for ten years, holds both the earned and honorary doctor's degree, of which he writes under our heading Among Us. A native of Texas, he was educated at Mercer University, Columbia University, Harvard University, Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary and Andover Newton Theological School, and holds a D.D. from Kalamazoo College. Author of several books and contributor to the religious press, Dr. Straton has been active in both denominational and ecumenical movements, and was the Northern Baptist Convention's representative at the Amsterdam and Evanston assemblies of the World Council.

The Pulpit

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching

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Memo:

IN CHICAGO, so far as I know, Mr. P. K. Wrigley of chewing gum fortune does not gift the clergy of his city with season tickets for his Cubs' games. In St. Louis, as I well know, Mr. August Busch of Budweiser beer fortune does give every preacher in town a season pass to his Cardinals' games. Which is, I suppose, just one more twist on the truism that candy is dandy but liquor is quicker. What prompts that rueful reflection, of course, is the opening of the first baseball season since my removal from St. Louis to Chicago. Oh, I'll get out to Wrigley Field once or twice under my own steam, I guess, though why anyone should make the effort this year is still not clear. I have a cellar of my own that needs attention. But I'll go, if for no other reason, the way some people go to church: out of loyalty to my father's loyalty.

Out there, the fans will be watching for something more congregations ought to be getting—a change of pace. There is a trick of the pitcher's trade that ought to be a trick of every preacher's trade. The pulpit, which tries always to learn from the Mount, has something to learn from the mound.

Change of pace. For the pitcher, this means varying his delivery: fast balls, slow balls, fire balls, floaters. At the pitching end, variation is the idea. At the receiving end—batter and catcher—attentiveness, aliveness, alertness are the issue. The pitcher tries to keep the man out in front guessing. The man out in front can't miss a move, because he doesn't know what's coming.

What an ideal for the pulpit-pew relationship. Can you imagine whole congregations leaning forward, charged, focused, fearful of missing a word? Maybe that is too exhausting an ideal. But it will do no harm to get closer to it than many congregations are right now. Preaching ought not to be so taxing that parishioners have to be sent to the showers after the service, but it certainly can be more demanding than it often is.

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Now all this is not brought to mind just by the baseball season. I've been listening to preachers again—and how I hope the good men in my home church know that I get around to enough other churches so I'm not talking about them! Anyway, while I listen to these *other* preachers I find myself longing for a change of pace. Just physically it would be good to have that change of pace: some variation in the tempo and dynamics of speech. The call here is not for anything extreme—no preacher should race his motor or hold his horses just for effect. Neither whispers nor hollers are necessary. But any or all of these are preferable to the deadly evenness that characterizes too many deliveries. Just as no point is made when all are equally underpitched, so no single point is made when all points are italicized. Let the delivery walk awhile, run when appropriate, march occasionally, and even dance now and then. But keep it moving and keep it mixed.

The same change of pace is in order where style is concerned. Consistency is important, I know, but please let it be consistent variety. There is a place for purple in preaching, but only in patches. Nothing throws a pall over a contemporary congregation faster than an all-purple sermon. The day of the florid, the baroque in preaching is past. The reach for moving, poetic beauty is right, but only when it is in place: that is, when it adorns appropriate parts of the sermon instead of smothering the whole sermon. There is as much stylistic suggestiveness for today in Hemingway, journalese, and even *Time*-style, as there is in the old Scottish divines. Not that these newer styles should take over *in toto*, however. A steady staccato is as deadly as the ponderous period. Instead, lay levy on every style, vary the statement, keep them guessing.

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The substance of preaching needs regular change of pace, too—both within sermons and between sermons. Because each preacher has his own particular background and his own particular needs, he tends to concentrate on an element or two in the gospel, and give that his all, week after week. But the gospel is as wide as the world. It is relevant to everything that bothers or delights any man. Each sermon has to range, the preaching of a year has to range. Concentrate on the single soul, but never leave him without relating him to the whole world and all of time. Focus on creation and its Creator, but don't leave out the human creature. Individual/social; priestly/prophetic; doctrinal/ethical; creation/redemption; other-worldly/this-worldly—these are matched pairs, not mutual exclusives. The faithful preacher will shift his weight often enough within each sermon, and between the sermons of a year, so the whole gospel will be preached. Without this particular change of pace, the people get tragically truncated gospels, no matter how various and absorbing the deliveries. Keep fluid as fluent.

T. A. G.

THE GOSPEL THAT IS

And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. John 3:19.

THE phrase "Communicating the Gospel" is one that is not far from shibboleth status. Its concern, though, is legitimate. Some insight into the problem indicated by the phrase may be suggested by the dramatic meeting between Jeremiah and Hananiah (Jeremiah 28).

Jeremiah had recommended to King Zedekiah, sometime after the great "Exile" of 586, that Zedekiah should bring his "necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him." To make his point unequivocally plain, the prophet had made a wooden yoke and worn it about his neck. Hananiah, himself a prophet, met Jeremiah in the Temple on some public occasion and challenged his reading of the signs of the time: "Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon." With these words Hananiah removed the wooden yoke from Jeremiah's neck, broke it, and declared, "Thus says the Lord: Even so will I break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon from the neck of all the nations within two years." The Bible records cryptically that then "Jeremiah the prophet went his way."

A Contemporary Problem

But "his way" in this case led Jeremiah to another encounter with the living God, and thence to the foundry where he fashioned a yoke of iron. Placing this upon his neck, he again confronted Hananiah, declaring: "Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: I have put upon the neck of all these nations an iron yoke of servitude to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and they shall serve him, for I have given to him even the beasts of the field. . . . Listen, Hananiah, the Lord has not sent you, and you have made this people trust in a lie. . . . This very year you shall die, because you have uttered rebellion against the Lord."

We may not wish to agree with certain of the interpretations which Jeremiah gives—his recommendation of submission to a foreign power, his hex on the life of Hananiah. But we shall have to agree with Jeremiah's previously declared standard for judging a true prophet: "As for the prophet who prophesies of peace, when the word of that prophet comes to pass, then it will be known that the Lord has truly sent the prophet." And we shall have to agree with Jeremiah's description of false prophecy: "You have uttered rebellion against the Lord." Certainly we shall have to agree that through this historical incident Jeremiah has spoken to an always contemporary problem, and declared the relationship between this problem and "the word of God." We do not court suspense or strain after paradox when we say that Jeremiah's word of God is precisely that all words of God are judged, except the loyal declaration that God's word is God's *alone.*

Being human, we cannot but admit that we are surrounded by relativities. Our moral codes are relative; our religious institutionalism is sated with relativity; our knowledge, at its highest, is relative, partaking of subjective presuppositions and encompassed by real limits. Culture is one vast complex, within which competing value-structures are explicated, each claiming to stand outside the relativities of existence, and each thereby becoming an idolatry ripe for the judgment that shatters.

Relativities Surround Us

Within the churches the petition "Thy will be done" is regularly made, with an all too often *sotto voce* addendum, "and I shall specify what it is." From this position which is presumed to be outside the necessities of judgment, commandments to abstain or to participate in this or that are spawned, codes are erected, and easy identifications of the will of God—e.g., self-realization, worryless eunuchery and a typology of "peaces"—are made. It must be said to all such anthropocentric snares: "It is not good to be too sure of the Lord."

Yet Jeremiah did declare the word of the Lord, we say; and the inevitable question arises: "How did he escape the relativities?" Here were two men, both claiming to speak for God, both employing the formula "Thus says the Lord." Perhaps we should have more sympathy with the Israelites and with King Zedekiah, harassed as we are with many voices that clamor in the name of God today. There was no superhuman interpreter given to the king who, after all, had to make the decision; and it ought to be obvious to us still that the communication which comes to us in the form of a New Testament is provided with no "translation pony" which transcends our limited viewpoints. For the "Spirit of Truth," the Counselor of whom John speaks, has not yet drawn a blueprint, certain ecclesiastical apologists notwithstanding. The one thing we can be sure of is that when this Spirit operates, it makes a shambles of the too-sure interpretations of the apologists.

By G. Wayne Glick

NOT HEARD

And here the validity of Jeremiah's declaration becomes apparent: he was speaking out of a loyalty to God which escaped relativity only by the recognition and affirmation of the separate, unique integrity of God.

Hananiah, an earlier representative of the latter day success-cult, had the audience and he communicated to it. Jeremiah, speaking only when he was impelled to do so by divine command, declared a gospel for this situation, and he was not heard. There is no reason to impugn the motives of either man; both were "sincere." We can imagine with what ardor of speech and brightness of countenance Hananiah declared to an apprehensive people and a distraught king that there was *hope!* Jeremiah, doubtless, was his old glum, hypercritical self, negative in outlook, counseling submission. What chance, after all, did he have to be heard, especially when Hananiah could declare with as much assurance that *his* was the true word of the Lord? Yet, "You have uttered rebellion against the Lord," Jeremiah charged; your sincerity and your hope is a pious fraud, drawn out of the poisoned wells of your own egocentricity. There is only one position from which one may speak if he would hope to avoid the relativities: this is the recognition that there is no absolute possession, but only approximations to loyalty. Recognizing the limitations of creaturehood, never unequivocally possessing the word of God, one can live as a citizen of the Kingdom of God at the same time that the tendentious loyalties required of him as a citizen in culture are allowed their proper, but always contingent, actualization in decisions.

Imaginings vs. Enlightenment

Hananiah's "simple gospel," like most of those which have followed him, was just too simple, and therefore irrelevant. Jeremiah's gospel, the issue of ceaseless struggle, through which struggle God had revealed himself in self-disclosure, was never simple. Hananiah was "operating," manipulating his idol which, though given the name of God, was still an idol of Hananiah's imagination. Jeremiah, having been "met," and knowing himself to have been met, was thrust into a position of absolute trust. His loyalty and his trust were the absolutes which transcended and enlightened all the relativities of life; but they were absolutes not because Jeremiah affirmed them to be so, or felt them to be so, or had been taught that they were so, but because God had himself demanded these qualities of commitment when he disclosed himself to Jeremiah. Hananiah's absolutes were "vain imaginations," human attempts to prescribe what deity must be and do. Jeremiah's absolutes were a product of the self-disclosure of God, within which disclosure propositional necessities gave way to existential confession.

The Gospel as Judgment

Why then was the true gospel of Jeremiah not heard, while the spurious gospel of Hananiah was heard? The perplexing text from the Nicodemus pericope of the Gospel of John is relevant to this omnipresent problem of communication: "And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." How radically that challenges the assumption of the adjustment cults that all men natively respond to "the light." "Men *loved* darkness." Further, it should be noted that the current *bon mot* of the religious revival, "The important thing is to believe," assumes a vastly different hue when some biblical content is injected into the cure-all "belief." True enough, John affirms that "he who does not believe is condemned already," but he immediately joins this to doing "what is true" and "deeds . . . wrought in God." The revealing paraphrase, therefore, would be, "Whoever is *faithful* to him shall not perish, but have eternal life." The reason that John gives for the rejection of the light that has come into the world is precisely this: their deeds are evil, i.e., they are unfaithful.

Finally, those who hold that the gospel is simple, reasonable and easy to follow are challenged, not only by the declaration that "men loved darkness," but by the *identification of the gospel as judgment.* Three verses removed from "whoever believes in him should not perish" is the astounding statement that "this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world . . ." The activity of the divine in history is not only that of emancipation, or redemption; it is also a judging light that illumines all the dark corners of pretense; all the egocentricity of self-realization; all the self-righteousness of legalistic formulas, codes and thou-shalt-nots, humanly contrived; all the propositional hypocrisies which substitute themselves for genuine confrontation. The light has come in the Word made flesh, and men will no longer be able to construct unchal-

(Continued on page 8)

A Physicist-Priest Views God in History

The Face of Destiny

By William G. Pollard

Genesis 50:20.

THE very last incident in the story of Joseph, in the last Book of Genesis, after the death of Jacob, or Israel, is a scene in which Joseph's brothers come to him and fall down before him, not only in contrition but in fear, because of Joseph's power and the recollection of their evil acts. And Joseph says to them this sentence: "As for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today." This one passage provides a key to this whole story: a key to the meaning that the story had for its participants and for all who heard it within the culture of which it was a part. It brings to memory the long sequence of events that led up to it—the scene at the pit where Joseph's brothers stripped him, threw him in the pit and later sold him into slavery to a wandering nomad tribe who carried him away to a foreign land. This evil act, expressing the bitterness of their hearts and their jealousy of their brother, descended on Joseph suddenly and unexpectedly. Finding himself then a slave in a foreign land, how all must have seemed lost—his whole career, everything he expected of life, all he had hoped for, wiped out in one sudden act, leaving him in Egypt a helpless slave.

But then there comes equally to mind all the remarkable developments that ensued which, step by unexpected step, led to his finally becoming the highest official, next to Pharaoh, in this foreign land of Egypt. What an amazing development! In this scene they both, he and his brothers together, are looking back on all these incidents and their mysterious significance. As they contemplate this together Joseph recognizes that uppermost in his brothers' thoughts is the terrible hurt they did him. Immediately he comes out with the interpretation of it: "As for you, you meant evil against me all right, and this isn't in any way wiped out by subsequent developments. Still, without either of us knowing how, in the mystery of the unfolding of events, God has canceled the evil effect of your act. All we can do now—both you who tried to do evil against me and I who thought that all was lost as a result—all we can do is to stand back together in awe and wonder and amazement, and acknowledge that even though you meant evil God has turned it into good. If I had not been so ill-used by you where would Egypt be today? The land is in the throes of a terrible famine, and it is only because of my presence here and position that this has not produced calamity and disaster. And so God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today."

Fundamental Questions

Well, this raises some very fundamental questions and very basic problems about human existence. It raises the question of human freedom and of divine providence. My remarks this evening are directed toward several of the aspects of these questions that emerge from a contemplation of this story, against the background of an attempt to understand the significance and meaning of providence.

Joseph in this statement is not simply brushing off past acts. He is not simply letting bygones be bygones, or just forgetting the past, or excusing the evil of his brethren. They both acknowledge the evil act and they acknowledge its seriousness. But there is rather a different kind of sense about it. There's a sense of destiny about it. There's an insight into the way human life actually does turn out, not just in this story but in all of our own individual stories. There's a full recognition on the one hand of the responsibility of our actions in the exercise of our freedom. We actually *do* do irreparable damage. We are responsible for terrible hurts. And these acts of ours and the freedom with which we make them cannot be lightly brushed aside. But at the same time, every act that we perform, every decision that we make, is made not really with a sense that as a result of it things are going to happen the way we want them to, or that we can by our decisions and the exercise of our freedom make things happen the way we plan for them to happen, but rather that we decide because we must decide, because our decisions are a part of our destiny. In deciding what we are able to do, we make it possible for that to be brought into reality which without us and without our decision could not come into being. This is the role of responsibility and freedom in providence. It is not that we intervene and manipulate to manage things the way we want them to come out, but rather that we go forth to meet, in order that a new reality can come out of the situations that we are involved in. The matter will not turn out the way we expect it to. When it's over, as we look back on it, all we can do if we're honest, is to acknowledge that it has not turned out anything like the way we expected it to.

The Mystery of Life

And so both Joseph and his brethren acknowledge this. There is a humility in this statement and an awed recognition of the mystery of history and of life. And Joseph indeed calls his brothers to stand up. He says, "Fear not, for am I in the place of God?" Or in other words, "In falling down before me are you not essentially saying that your evil act

against me is all there is to history, so that there is really no other power beyond your own decision capable of saving us both? Am I in the place of God? Is there nothing that transcends both your evil act and my good works as well? Well, there is. You stand up. I am not in the place of God. As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good."

This is a difficult thing for us to respond to meaningfully today, because by and large we have attempted to understand history without providence. When we teach history today, we speak about the course of events in human society as though it were all an orderly process, an inevitable unfolding of events in accordance with some universal law—economic, sociological, psychological, geographic, ethnic or what have you—so that things seem to happen the way they do because of the laws of nature which cause them, inevitably requiring their happening in just the way they do happen, with no alternatives.

Providence in History

And when we think of the course of events in our own lives and in the life of an institution of which we're a part, in the life of our nation or in the life of the whole of humanity in these terms, the only way we can imagine what providence could be is to think of the stopping of a machine and the intervention in it of something that comes from outside; that is completely beyond and independent of the process of history. We think of history as a machine, a mechanism, and of providence as something that has to intervene like a bolt out of the blue and stop the machine and tinker with it, and then set it off again. But this is not what providence is. This is not what Joseph had in mind. There's no sense of a machine—of an inevitable, impersonal unfolding—in this story of Joseph. And providence, in order to be responded to at all—providence and destiny, in order to be apprehended meaningfully—must be apprehended within a totally different context, within a totally different view of history.

In such a revised view, we can come to see that life, and history, is something totally different from a mechanism, something much more like an organism, something living, alive, full of will and power and dynamism; that events tumble over themselves in a living way; and that the alternative to providence is not a mechanism but simply random accident or inexplicable chance. Thus what appears as providence to those like Joseph with the capacity to see in life and history the hand of God and the power of the Lord of history, will appear to those who lack this capacity simply as luck, chance, fortune. How many of us for example think when we read the story of Joseph, "Wasn't it simply an extraordinary sequence of lucky events and chance coincidences which brought Joseph out of the depths of slavery and raised him up to the second highest position in Egypt?" How is it possible to see in such a story anything more than great good fortune?

History, when it is viewed without God in a world that has no Creator and no Lord expressing the will of history, is a great assemblage of chance and accident that the common man who knows not the living Lord in history can only think of in terms of fortune and misfortune, as a random process of luck. This expression of a view of history which contrasts the providential and the accidental, contrasts destiny and chance, is magnificently put in a fairly recent account of American history by Oscar Handlin, under the title *Chance or Destiny*, with a subtitle *Turning Points in American History*. Mr. Handlin, a Harvard history professor, looks at the amazing emergence in a period of a little more than 150 years of America as a world power and asks himself the question, "How did this happen?" And he presents the story of how it happened in terms of eight turning points which are most incisively put: the victory at Yorktown, the Louisiana Purchase, the Battle of Gettysburg, Seward and Alaska, and the like. Each of these crucial turning points in American history forms a chapter in his book. And then at the end he raises the question about the nature of history in general, of which this segment of American history is a part. He raises the question this way:

> In looking backward over the past, we do not wish to admit that we are ourselves the products of a series of accidents; we grope for some meaningful connection between the incidents that constituted the turning points and their surrounding circumstances. Yet the causes of the former are independent of the causes of the latter. The atmospheric conditions that brought on the storm and the military conditions that caused Cornwallis' army to retreat were the products of altogether separate chains of causes and effects. Was then their fateful convergence simply a contingency, unforeseeable and without meaning except in its results?*

This of course is just the question raised by Joseph with his brethren, is it not? What is the meaning, he asks them, of this long series of accidents that have brought us both to the point where we find ourselves today?

Destiny or Chance?

At the end of the book Mr. Handlin summarizes these thoughts in the following passages:

> Is it truer to speak of just eight turning points in American history?
>
> No! Not if to do so implies that all that transpired between each of them was orderly and inevitable by the operations of some regularity of law.
>
> For the turning points are made of such stuff as these: of a shifting wind and a courtier's slyness, of a woman's greed and an old man's hatred, of a metal's failure and a soldier's blunder. Unplanned encounters enter into the shaping of events, and so too thoughtless words, the shape of a young girl's face, and the quirks of character of politicians. These are the ingredients that determine the zigzags of history; and the historian can begin to understand its course only when he perceives that it is a line made up of a succession of points, with every point a turning point.*

This is what history really is. This is what life really is. And we have only two alternatives if we are honest and not swept away by illusions as to how much control we are able to exercise over the process. We either have the alternative of looking

*Oscar Handlin, *Chance or Destiny: Turning Points in American History* (Boston: Atlantic-Little Brown, 1954, 1955). Used by permission.

at history from the outside and seeing nothing but good luck and bad luck; nothing but chance and accident. Or we can acquire the capacity to look at history biblically and from the inside as a participant in it. The life and experience of Israel as a people in history gave to them a unique capacity and insight. The Bible is the literature with which they expressed the deep meanings and realities of their experience of their own history as an intimate covenant relationship with God. And out of that comes the capacity that colors all events in a totally different hue, so that one can look back on events in wonder and with full realization of the presence of the living God, in judgment and in redemption, in the shaping of all events that constitute our lives and our history.

This can give us a victorious sense about life. This biblical understanding of history was indeed the heart of the hope proclaimed near by here a year and a half ago at Evanston, when the World Council of Churches assembled and proclaimed to the world in the theme of Evanston: "Christ, the Hope of the World." This was the proclamation—that Christ, our Lord and Savior, lies at the center of all reality and all events; often in judgment, to be sure, but also in love and redeeming power. And there's a victorious hope in the response to Christ as Lord of all history. It is moreover a sure and dependable hope because this is the true secret of what history really is: the true solution to the otherwise baffling mystery of history.

Let us close with a prayer.

O God, for as much as without thee we are not able to please thee, mercifully grant that thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Gospel Not Heard

(Continued from page 5)

lenged their idolatrous "good" systems. Henceforth there is a standard of redemptive love which makes necessary the radical judgment of all human systems on its terms. To say that the process by which this takes place is simple is to deny the testimony of every legitimate saint of the Christian church. Loyal, trustful following is never easy or simple.

The communication of the gospel, a concern of the church throughout its history, is no less a problem today than it has ever been. This is hardly a revolutionary insight, though it is often forgotten. True communication means not only the preaching but also the hearing of the gospel; it therefore assumes a concern for the seedbed as well as for the seed. Perhaps the chief impediment to our communication today is the Babel of press, radio and television, dinning into our ears all kinds of prescriptions for all kinds of ills. The first task of communication may be the negative one of identifying the gods and goods which are false, of declaring what is *not* gospel. Certainly the crass subjectivity of the various self-realization joy cults must be challenged. But when we have challenged the modern deities of body and cleanliness, life and leisure adjustment and security, progress and happiness et cetera, *ad infinitum, ad nauseam*, we have only begun the preparation of the soil.

Seven devils may well take the place of one unless the true Word is preached and heard. For this task at least two positive principles must be employed.

In the first place, there must be an understanding of that biblical anthropology which ungirded the utterances of both Jeremiah and Jesus. In attempting to communicate the gospel to men one must recognize the inclinations to idolatry which beset us all, the passionate hypocrisies which we employ to pervert truth, our love of the partial and the temporal, our tendency to disloyal pronouncements for the sake of a temporary emolument: in short, the fact that "men love darkness." But over against this must be placed the possibility of "deeds wrought in God," of loyal, trustful following of the givenness of the redeeming love of Christ apprehending us: in short, the possibility that the image given us may be redeemed to fidelity.

Finally, without usurping the place of judgment, it is this second principle—faithful declaration—which must inform our activity. And activity—or deeds—there must certainly be; for a statement of principles, without the willingness to enter into the real social, cultural and religious conflicts of a very dirty historical process, is perfectionistic, visionary and just plain indolent.

As we attempt this implementation we shall probably discover how caught and bound we are by the exigencies of human life, and we shall be reminded anew how limiting are the relativities of temporal existence. But with all our perplexity, we shall not need to despair. For like Jeremiah we shall find in the deity of God and in his self-disclosure a ground that is ultimate and sure, impelling us to faithful declaration. And beyond Jeremiah we shall be aware of a redemptive power that has come to us from God in Christ, sealing our loyalty, judging our pretense and empowering us in our daily work.

Trinity

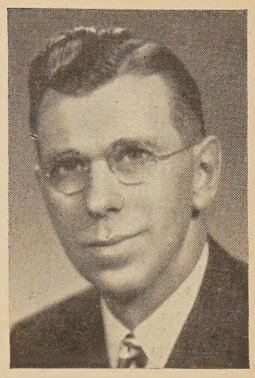
By Siegmund A. E. Betz

ON this sheer precipice of thought we stand
Unlaunched and footed to the last safe stone
Above Thy bright abysses, taut with longing fear,
And with the shock

That Thou, before so gentle, to this fearful vantage
Hast brought us—Friend so human, Spirit so immanent,
Father-God heart-close — drawn us lovewise and reasonwise *here*
To say *now*, "See the veil rent.

"I transcend as the ever-accompanied Alone.
I am One. I am Three."
Then faith fuses volition, command; we plunge forth into love
And leap up to incommensurate Thee.

Shallow Optimism Is No Substitute for the Way of the Cross



The Power of Negative Thinking

By Walter L. Cook

But Jesus did not trust himself to them, because he knew all men and needed no one to bear witness of man; for he himself knew what was in man. John 2:24-25.

BOOKS and articles there are aplenty which sing the praises of the positive thinker. Surely his opposite, the negative thinker, should not be denied his day in court. He is one who is not blind to the dark side of things. Confronted by a problem, he is cautious, careful and suspicious of any pat formula for solving it. In a pondful of fragrant water lilies he espies the lowly cow lily. When other people are racing to get aboard some band wagon he stands still and, often alone, refuses to budge. And he always counts the change even if the clerk has an honest face.

How different is the fabulous positive thinker who leaps from his bed in the morning uttering optimistic clichés as he disappears into the bathroom beating his chest and exclaiming: "I believe in myself." He is always saying that things are just fine, or at least are about to be, if you will just follow his prescribed course of six easy lessons.

Negative Thinking May Lead to Reform

There is room for the negative thinker in this world. He should be given a royal welcome on the official boards of churches. He has a way of discovering the loophole in more or less grandiose plans for putting church organizations out in front. He is a thorn in the flesh to the flashy go-getter who lacks the humility to admit he may be fallible. His presence should be invited at trustees' meetings when something "big" is afoot. His influence, if a little galling, may be wholesome. He will, if he can, point out that the minister's tremendous design for First Church may not be as sure fire as it sounds when he presents it. Perhaps his words are needed, annoying as they are. He helps the minister and his committees to plan at their best. Is it not the irritated oyster which produces the pearl? Perhaps the plans for the progress of the church will be more dependable for having been subjected to the scrutiny of a critic not noted for rosy optimism. Blessed are church members when they are patient with their fellow committeeman who is a negative thinker.

Rose-colored glasses can give a warped view of affairs. Many of the improvements in our churches got their start in the mind of a dissatisfied member. His eye is always on the error, his finger on the flaw. He growls and complains and calls attention to blemish and spot.

What is the most dreaded enemy of Christianity in our time? Communism? Indeed no. It could be a smug minister and a complacent congregation. It may be the contemporary mentality which sees the status quo as just perfect. It might also be the bland optimist who is always making the most of "as is." Sometimes "as is" can be bad business. The negative thinker is never satisfied with things as they are.

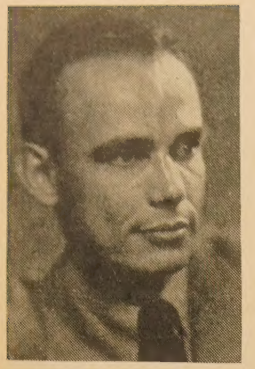
Every age needs courageous men and women to floodlight the glaring evils of the times. Such people may be aware of beauty and light, but they are aware also of the ugly and the dark. Their eyes may be open to sunsets and the wonders of our day, but they see also the dirt "and all that spawn and die in it." If they are ready to listen to the music of the spheres, still they do not miss the "bitter ballads of the slums."

In these days much thought is given to the maladjusted person. His plight is viewed with patience and pity. Could it be that some concern over maladjusted people is misplaced? The negative thinker says it is. He claims that adjustment can be a blind, calloused thing. He wants to ask: "Should we adjust ourselves to the unrighteous society in which we live?" After all adjustment can become indifference or lazy conformity to evil. It is a moot question whether a thoroughgoing Christian *can* adapt himself to an unchristian society. How may he modify and regulate his principles to fit a godless environment? How meditate upon hunger, hatred and misery in the world and still be relaxed? Hear that maladjusted letter writer of long ago: "Do not be conformed to this world."

Nonconformists, All

Suppose a monk named Martin Luther had been better adjusted to the Roman Catholic tyranny of his day. Suppose Sam Adams had been willing to "go along" with the British Crown prior to the American Revolution. Suppose William Wilberforce had been conformed to the slave trade of England. Suppose Jane Addams had been guilty of simple conformity to the status quo in Chicago's slums. Without this quartet of maladjusted reformers would there have been a Reformation, an American Revolution, freedom from slavery in Britain, settle-

(Continued on page 21)



A Commencement Address at Lindenwood College

Creation Continues

By Huston Smith

I AM sure we all want to begin by paying tribute to those who are the focus of this occasion—the graduating seniors. It has been no easy road which has led you to these moments. So I want to salute you, especially those of you who have given more than the minimum of yourselves to these years of your education. Of such is the kingdom of the spirit. And if I speak of you as the heroes of our time, it is because I believe that the disciples of education in its truest sense are the leaven of civilization.

For what is education? Collection of scraps of information? An amassing of hours and credits? Acquiring of veneer of culture? Certainly we must conceive it in higher terms than these.

Education at its best is not so much a matter of information as transformation—transformation of the human spirit into a life of quickened perception, nobler aspiration, heightened enthusiasm, deeper community.

When we speak of education in these terms, we see at once that its basic theme can be reduced to a single word. That word is "creation."

To begin with, it would be the word which, I feel sure, most fully sums up the years you have spent here at Lindenwood. They have been creative years. Some of you may not be aware of this, for thoughts turn slowly, the mind ripens with grace, not in dramatic, violent conversions. But change has occurred.

Will Creation Continue in Your Life?

Creation, typified by your years here and basic to all education, is the most wonderful mystery the mind can know. The question it leaves us with is whether creation, which has advanced so amazingly up to the present, is now over, or whether it is to continue. This question is our theme this morning.

It would be easy—but at the same time fatuous and sentimental—if I were to assure you that creation will continue through you. For creation is never automatic and never easy; it must always make its way against tremendous odds.

Specifically it must make its way against our latent fear (fear of the new, the unknown, the uncharted); against pride (the complacency which feels it already has all the answers); above all against sloth (that invincible laziness which would prefer to rest on its oars in any little lagoon instead of push out into the open seas).

Confronted as we always are with these familiar foes of the spirit, it is far from certain that creation will continue through you. Whether or not it does depends in the end on your wish. Whether it continues depends on how much you want it to, how much you want to be kept sensitive, growing, wondering, inquiring.

What Direction Will It Take?

A question more pertinent is what direction will it take if creation does continue in your life. I will mention four avenues down which I think creation will move if it is to be true creation.

1. It will continue to the extent that you succeed in being yourself. To be one's self is a real achievement in the modern world. There is a tendency in our time to standardize personality. We noise individualism to great lengths, yet have a way of melting personalities into a chromic-plated mass. Where we make our mistake is in believing that unity requires uniformity. Grains of sand are very much alike, yet a sandpile has little unity. The instruments of a symphony orchestra are different, yet an orchestra is a whole.

We must beware of conformity which tends to cut the edge of creation in our time.

2. Creation will continue to the extent in which we discover the meaning of love. Psychotherapy has made a contribution in the extent to which it has shown the secret of how creativeness, and mental health itself, depend on the ability to love and be loved in turn.

3. The third avenue in which creation will move if it is to be true creation in our time is the extent to which we grow to think in terms of a world community.

Science has shrunk our world to where it is not so much a globe as a globule. Whatever problems we turn to—world peace, racial equality, civil liberties, economic justice—we must think not only in terms of our own bailiwick but in terms of the whole.

The time has come in history where a person who is only a Chinese, only an American, etc., is only half human; the other half of himself, which is in common with all men, has yet to be awakened. Creation will continue to the extent in which we think in world terms.

4. Creation will continue to the extent that men and women discover the spiritual character of reality and stop dealing with the ground of their being as if it were a mere thing. For only this realization can, in the end, call out the most creative response from man.

I have tried to suggest a few things by way of the

rection creation might take if it is to continue rough you.

Actually, however, I don't put much stock in this atter of directives. You will forget my suggestions; ore important, you will work out sights of your vn. The one thing which I do hope to leave with ou is a sense of why creation is so important in life. We need to see its importance, because creation never easy, and unless we understand why it is nportant we will be apt to throw in the towel and ift along in the easiest way.

Life is never simply a joy ride. It is not simply at pain must come; but there's the further fact at life keeps tossing us new problems. If only it ould give us one at a time, maybe we could cope ith them. But the world is never caught up, and it never going to be. There are always jungles to be eared, diseases to be cured, peace to be won. And is all up to us. . . . We ask for bread, and get seed. 'e ask for men, and get teenagers! Life puts new roblems on our desk before the last one is done. here's no end to *anything* in life. Everything is ere to be done: every chapter in every book, every apter in every life to be written. Sometimes the eer labor of it all is frightening, exhausting.

The Strange Riddle of Life

There is, however, one point which if we could get straight, would help to put this whole matter of ork-creation in perspective. The point is this: hat the universe seems bent on producing is not so uch a good world but a good man. Everything else this universe is mere scaffolding—the sun, moon, ars, hills, seas and the plains are just finger work. he main theme is man.

This seems to be the purpose of creation itself. he creation of man. Man is not made; he is being ade. Once we get hold of that, much of the strange ddle of life becomes amazingly clear.

A finished world would mean a finished man. The ig dreams of history never come true. Age after age an has dreamed of the perfect world. But the reams don't come true. Plato's *Republic*, More's *topia*, "The war to end wars," "The war to make e world safe for democracy." The slogans are all lusions. Hope and history are always miles apart. ome have alleged that the *Christian Century*, hich was founded at the beginning of this century, as named hopefully to describe this 20th century. oday that hope looks like a mockery.

Is it a cheat? Or is it creative? Man is always ursuing a horizon which he never reaches. But he ets something along the way. Abraham didn't each the land he sought, but he got a sense of desiny. Moses looked for a land of milk and honey hich he didn't find, but he got freedom in the rocess. There is no end of people pursuing things hey never get. They never make it, but sometimes makes them—and that is infinitely more important.

There will always be plenty of people like Omar hayyam who say they could do a better job with reation. What they don't tell us is how character ould be produced in this ideal world.

Life is difficult, but you have to make up your mind whether this difficulty makes life cruel or creative. Whether or not creation continues in your lives is a question we cannot answer. We have sketched the story of life as creation as far as it can be told. It is up to you to continue it. All we know is that the story will end as you wish.

Baccalaureate Invocation

By Garland Evans Hopkins

With two introductory supplications from the Book of Worship *(Methodist)*

ALMIGHTY God, our heavenly Father, who hast committed to thy holy church the care and nurture of thy children; enlighten with thy wisdom those who teach and those who learn, that, rejoicing in the knowledge of thy truth, they may worship thee and serve thee all the days of their life.

O God of truth, we pray thee for the people of our day, that there may be found from them teachers who love thee with understanding, who, being both reverent and enlightened, shall be able to show their learners an ever clearer vision of eternal truth. Thou who guidest the wisdom of the scholar, be thyself the shepherd of those who feed thy sheep, that their thoughts and words may come from thee.

O God of yesterday, today and tomorrow, take, we pray thee, into thy safekeeping these young lives —the beloved boys and girls of our homes and community whom we have tenderly protected and shielded, who tonight are matured into young men and women who must now make their way in a world which offers little of tenderness and protection.

Thou knowest, O God, that the times in which our lives are lived are as a chastening rod. Even here in our community we have felt the long shadow of the conflict of our modern Gog and Magog. Grant that each of these graduates may do his part to lift that shadow. If it be thy will, may some from this class dream the dreams and see the visions our world sorely needs. Grant them the courage to battle for right, the faith to live above discouragements, the hope to believe in the triumph of good over evil.

Yet it is not for Einsteins or even Schweitzers that we pray most on this night. Rather, O God, we pray that these may be good men and women whose lives will be integrated and happy. Grant them that charity toward fellow man which "envieth not," "vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up," but which, though the world crumble, "never faileth."

Finally, O God, let these who as children have spoken as children, understood as children, thought as children, now put away childish things. Grant that after the slow and sometimes difficult course they now begin, the day will come when they will graduate into full maturity of mind, soul and body.

Above all, we pray that they may keep close to thee throughout the years and that they may know as an elder brother thy Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Our Children's Religion

By Ben M. Herbster

Train up a child in the way he should go,
and when he is old he will not depart from it.
Proverbs 22:6.

ALL of us are concerned that our boys and girls may grow up into men and women of strong faith. No matter what else life may bring to us, if we are disappointed in this—that is, if our children do not become men and women of character, if they do not follow in God's way, if they do not become obedient unto him, if they do not consider that their first duty is to love him with all their hearts and with all their souls and all their minds, and their neighbor as themselves—then everything else for us turns to dust and ashes. Money, fame, fortune, comfort—what are these to parents whose children turn out to be rascals? If only there were some simple, sure, guaranteed procedure, such as vaccination, that would insure our children a strong faith!

Much appreciated in our home is the little magazine, *Children's Religion*, published monthly by the Pilgrim Press. Annually, when the time comes to renew our subscription, I write a check for $3.00. And I find myself wishing that by such a simple act as the payment of $3.00 one might insure that one's children would get religion. There are many people who would like to do that. There are some people who even try to do it. There are parents who hope that by the payment of $3.00 or $5.00 or $10.00 or even $50 a year to the church, they will insure that their children will become men and women of strong faith. Well, if speaking loudly would help to emphasize my point, I would like to say in the loudest voice that I can muster, "*You can't do that!*" You cannot be sure that for $3.00 your children will get religion. It is a much more complicated process than that and one that takes a far larger contribution. Oh, I do not particularly mean a larger contribution in money, though that perhaps is included, but I mean a greater contribution of time and effort and consecration and devotion.

Five Steps for Parents

Once again I would like to emphasize that there is no one thing that you can do to make certain that your children grow up into men and women of strong faith. There are no specifics in the situation. There is no one thing that will guarantee such results. I mean there are no "antibiotics" available here. Rather, it is like trying to treat a cold. You have to do everything that you think will be of value and hope that something will help.

This morning I want to talk to you about five steps which a father and mother must take if they want to be sure that their children follow in the way that leads to life. First of all, the parents themselves must have some religion. Though this seems like a very simple statement and one that ought to be self-evident, in practice it is often overlooked. At least there are many, many people who seem to be very concerned that their children shall have faith, that their children shall have a knowledge of God and love and devotion for him, but who give little or no evidence that they have any faith themselves. When this is true there are about two and a half strikes on the child before he begins, and on the church in seeking to vouchsafe unto the children that faith. You cannot hand on to anybody else that which you do not have yourself.

By and large our children become what we are. I could give you one illustration after another right out of my own life, and you could furnish illustrations out of your own lives. Our youngsters are always picking up our bad habits and accentuating them. And no matter how much we warn them and scold them and try to teach them differently, by and large they turn out the way we are. "What we do echoes so loudly in their ears that they cannot hear what we say." We must be men and women of strong faith, of devotion, to the Cause of Christ. We could do as I did with that subscription—write the check and send it in, but never participate in reading the magazine myself—and expect that our children will have religion. It takes a lot more than that. With a $3.00 or a $10.00 or a $3,000.00 gift, we cannot impart to our children that which we do not have ourselves. We must be men and women of faith in order that our children shall be men and women of faith.

In the second place, this faith which we possess we must express. That expression must be twofold. We must express it in worship and we must express it in life. Nothing so convinces a child of the reality of God and of the worth of the gospel of Jesus Christ as to see his father and mother bowing their heads in worship, singing praises unto the living God and being active in the Cause that seeks to make the world into the Kingdom. Every once in awhile somebody says to me, "Oh, I always see that my children go to church. I haven't got time to go myself, but I see that they go." I suppose that is something, but it surely is not the most important "something." No matter how much preaching those parents do, the children know by something that is much more emphatic how important God and the

hings of God seem to the parents. They know by he way the parents live. By and large children ome to think important those things that loom arge in importance to their family. It is a law of ife which you cannot avoid. If you want your chil- lren to follow the way that leads to life, which in- ludes spending enough time in worship so that God continues to have first place in their lives, then ou parents also must worship.

Expressing Faith

But beyond worshiping you must live out your aith. A child may repeat every Sunday: "Thou halt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and vith all thy soul and with all thy mind. This is the irst and the great commandment and the second is ike unto it. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thy- self." But it is unlikely that the child will ever grow nto a man or woman of devotion and good will if he parent in the home lives by a pattern altogether different from the pattern of good will. If the parent nates everyone, if the parent is prejudiced against everyone, if the parent has none of the milk of hu- man kindness in him, it is not likely that the child will grow up to be loving, kind and helpful. Let's take a very concrete illustration: if for us parents, Negroes are "Niggers," if Italians are "Dagos," Hun- garians are "Hunkies," Chinese are "Chinks," and if when we use those phrases we make it plain that we mean them to be names of degradation, scorn and ridicule, then it is not likely that our children will become men and women of great heart, men and women of good will. "Carefully Taught," that song from *South Pacific*, presents a simple, funda- mental truth in about as fine a fashion as possible:

> You've got to be taught to hate and fear,
> You've got to be taught from year to year,
> It's got to be drummed in your dear little ear
> You've got to be carefully taught.
>
> You've got to be taught to be afraid of people
> Whose eyes are oddly made,
> And people whose skin is a diff'rent shade
> You've got to be carefully taught.
>
> You've got to be taught before it's too late
> Before you are six or seven or eight,
> To hate all the people your relatives hate
> You've got to be carefully taught! *

This is my point: the faith that we possess we must live, so that our children can see it, and seeing it, will come to follow it. They will come to have re- spect for and to give their time to those things which we demonstrate to be important for us.

Companionship Needed

In the third place, we must be willing to devote time to our children. There are no short cuts to Christian character, either for children or for par- ents. I confess that here, personally, I have fallen as far short as at any other place. In these days it is so easy for us to err when we are bombarded upon every hand to give time to this, that and the other cause—all good, but none of them as important as the rearing of children. Our children deserve our time, that together as a family we may enjoy some of the finer things of life. Some of the happiest mem- ories that I have of my childhood home are the long hours that my mother spent with us children play- ing games. I am afraid that our children do not have those same memories of our home. We have been too busy—but we dare not be too busy. We cannot give our youngsters a dollar or two and say, "Go to the movies," or "Go here or go there," and expect that that will be enough. Nothing can take the place of the time which we give to them, of the time that we devote to bringing them up "in the nurture and in the admonition of the Lord."

Remember, I said in the beginning that no matter what else life brings to us, unless it provides its greatest gift—the opportunity to see our children grow into Christian character—everything else will turn to dust and ashes. I believe that with all my heart. I dare say we all believe it. But in the hurry and scurry of life we are always putting off until tomorrow this thing that cannot wait, this thing of spending time with our children—working with them, playing with them, teaching them, reading with them, going on excursions with them. Remem- ber this: the period when our children are little, when they are in our homes, is very short. It is soon over. When the child is a baby, it seems as if child- hood will never end, that the infant never will grow up. But let me tell you it is soon over. While you have the opportunity, spend time with your chil- dren. Companionship is part of the price of their growing into good character, into men and women of God.

A Joyful Religious Faith

In the fourth place, if our children are to grow up in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord," then we have to do some direct teaching. Just as it is necessary, if our children are to inherit the cul- ture of the ages, that they should have instruction in the fields of mathematics and science, in gram- mar and spelling, in literature and history, so it is necessary that they have teaching in religious mat- ters if they are to inherit the faith of the ages. And the primary place for that teaching is the home. The church and the church school are only comple- mentary agents. Religion is best learned at a mother's knee, in the table conversations of a fam- ily, in reading aloud the stories and literary gems of the Bible, in praying together in family worship, in studying together the catechism, in learning about the church and the great Christian leaders of every age, including this one. Indeed, the cost of children's religion is more than $3.00 a year!

Finally, if our children are to grow up into good men and women, they must recognize in us—from us—the fact that Christianity is a religion of joy, satisfaction and happiness. If you will understand exactly what I mean, I will say that it is a religion of fun. We ought to have some fun in our Christian life. Sometimes we fall short here. Somehow, mis- takenly, many people have the idea that Christi-

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anity is a drab, dreary, melancholy affair. No end of trouble has come to religion from caricatures of ministers as men with tall hats, long Prince Albert coats and longer faces, always carrying umbrellas. No doubt some ministers have been that kind of people. But certainly our faith is not that kind of faith. Certainly Jesus Christ was not that kind of person; rather, he was one to whom little children were eager to go. Many artists have painted Jesus walking along a road with children. In my favorite among such paintings, Jesus has a distinct twinkle.

Now do not misunderstand me. Christianity is serious business; make no mistake about that. There is work that must be done. There are people who must be won; there are lives that must be saved; there is a world that must be built into the Kingdom. That is serious business, no matter how you look at it. But that does not mean there is no fun in Christianity.

Bright Promises

Paul wrote, "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, Rejoice." And one of the distinguishing marks of Christian hymnody is the great number of songs of rejoicing. We sing,

> Joyful, joyful, we adore Thee,
> God of glory, Lord of Love;
> Hearts unfold like flowers before Thee,
> Opening to the sun above.

Or again,

> Rejoice, ye pure in heart,
> Rejoice, give thanks, and sing!

This same emphasis must shine out through our lives. No matter what happens, no matter how serious the situation may be, no matter how many tasks are to be accomplished, God's strength and God's promises are available to us. God's promises are as new to us as tomorrow morning's newspaper. They are as real to us as the Rock of Gibraltar. There is no reason for us to go around looking and acting as if our doom is breathing hard upon our necks. All of you remember the story of Martin Luther's wife, who, in a particularly dark period in the struggle to establish Protestantism in Germany, came downstairs one day dressed in deep mourning. When Luther asked the reason for her attire, she said, "Oh, God is dead." This shocked the German churchman. He began to chide his wife for her blasphemy, but she said, "Well, he must be dead the way you are going around as if there were no hope, as if everything were lost." Truthfully, that is sometimes the way we act. That is the attitude some of us have toward our faith, toward our Christian commitment, toward our church. Instead of seeing that Christianity is a religion of freedom, of joy and of promise, we act as if our best days were all behind us, as if catastrophe were about to strike. No matter how dark the days may be, it is still true that "those who are with us are more than those who are with them." The promises of God are as bright as the morning star. "Lift up your eyes on high." By the contagion of our spirit our children should catch the joy of our faith.

You see what I meant when I said that $3.00 a year won't insure a child religion. It takes much more than that. It will take our best devotion through long years. With all our hearts we shall have to seek to train our children in the way they should go. Then we shall have the reward, perhaps the greatest in all of life, that comes of seeing our children follow in our footsteps in worship, in adoration and in service to the Christ who has done so much for us.

Hope, Patience and Fishing

Children's Sermon by Ralph Veit

Congregational, Santa Barbara, California

THE other day my son Jim and I were out fishing for halibut. We had been fishing most of the day without any luck when I got a terrific strike on my line. "This is it!" I shouted to Jim as I started to battle with my fish. I knew it was a big one, and I noticed that Jim was just as excited as I was.

Jim reeled in his line and got the gaff ready. "Oh boy, Daddy, we are going to take a halibut home today!" Jim shouted in great joy. "Bring it up near the boat, and I'll gaff it."

It was a big fish, so I had to play it a few minutes before I could get it up to the boat. We were both very eager to get a look at our halibut. But much to our dismay, when we got it up to where we could see it, we discovered we didn't have a halibut at all. We had a shovel-nosed shark on the line. It was a great disappointment to us. And what do you think we did then? We rebaited our hooks and went right on fishing for halibut.

There is a lesson in this fish story. Suppose you do go fishing for halibut, and you do have the hope and patience of a good fisherman. After many days you finally get your big strike, and you think you have hooked your halibut. But to your disappointment your much wanted halibut turns out to be a shovel-nosed shark. What do you do? If you are a good fisherman, you rebait your hook and start fishing for halibut again.

Now think about the job you are going to do in life. Think about the dream you are going to make come true someday. Suppose you work at something for months, and even years, and at last you think you have it. But, alas, what you thought was a halibut turns out to be a shovel-nosed shark. You failed when you thought success was yours. What will you do? If you have what it takes to be a good fisherman, you will start all over again, because you will still have hope and patience. A good fisherman doesn't let a shovel-nosed shark discourage him. And a boy or a girl who has what it takes to be a good fisherman, namely, hope and patience, doesn't let a failure discourage him. He learns something from his failure, and goes right on working for success.

Don't let a shovel-nosed shark rob you of the joy of fishing for halibut.

oodness Is the By-Product
f a Great Commitment

On Being Good without Trying

By William H. Hudnut, Jr.

EFFORTLESS goodness is the distinctive mark of a true Christian; he has learned the fine art being good without trying. His goodness is the atural fruit of unseen roots, the apparently spon-neous by-product of a deep devotion to God, nerging quietly but certainly from deep inner re-urces of faith and love. It is the product of a rticular point of view, the happy result of a cer-in way of life.

Many people feel, however, that goodness is pri-arily a matter of moral effort—that the more you y, the more you flex the biceps of your spiritual olition, the better you will be. If you are not good is because you are not trying hard enough, runs is theory; if you want to be better, try harder and arder. The only trouble with such an approach is at it binds a person instead of releasing him; it akes him tense instead of making him free. The manistic contention that more and more effort ill lead to more and more goodness is not neces-arily so; instead of harder and harder effort pro-ucing more and more Christianity, it very often roduces less and less, creating a sense of guilt and ustration, a depressed feeling about the inevitabil-y of sin, and a dissipation of hope. A continual lowing on one's moral hands is not alone sufficient nto righteousness. The beginning of spiritual wis-om is the realization that none is good save God, nd that we can approximate goodness only as we ve God and man with all our heart, soul, mind nd strength.

Love keeps no accounts; it is not a debit and redit affair. When Jesus said that we should for-ive seventy times seven, he did not mean that we ould forgive 490 times and then stop. He meant at the love of God is endless in its compassion, nd that we must seek to emulate that kind of love.

Imagine the misery that would ensue in a home here injuries were treasured and listed, where the usband kept a moral and spiritual account book gainst his wife and she kept one against him. "Last eek he gave me some flowers but the week before e not only was home late for supper without let-ing me know but he also failed to mow the lawn; o he's still in debt to me." Or, "Yesterday she agged me and this morning she failed to get me p on time; *so* I don't take her out Friday night." Christian love never acts that way. Think how oralistic account-keeping would work with chil-ren. "On Wednesday Jackie played in the mud nd got his clothes filthy; Thursday he not only disobeyed twice but took my hair brush out to massage that stray mongrel; Friday he lied to me about the brush. Saturday I overheard him using bad language to that sweet little girl next door; *so* this afternoon he simply cannot go with us on that picnic we had planned." Can you not visualize the havoc which that kind of legalistic approach would stir up in a home?

Complete Forgiveness

Do you suppose for a moment that God acts that way toward us? Is he to be thought of as the divine bookkeeper? Do you suppose that he accumulates the debits on our individual ledgers day after discouraging day, week by disheartening week, month upon devastating month, year after defeated year? Is that your conception of the infinite Creator through whom all things grow and in whom abides perfect love? Is that the way to build persons? On the contrary, the way to elicit the finest from personality is to appreciate it, forgive it, love it, and so release it into goodness and set it free for fullness of life. To be sure, punishment is often necessary, but so is forgiveness.

In God's economy there is no vindictiveness—only the impartial administration of his laws, the unceasing love and understanding of the transgressor, the full and complete forgiveness of the sinner who in sincere repentance wants it. The marks may be left from the sin and the punishment may be there, but the slate is wiped clean, the offenses are erased, the new start can be made, for God loves us and we have his forgiveness.

So even though it is true that we cannot be good without trying, it is far more deeply true that we can never hope to be good simply *by* trying. We grow in goodness not so much as we strive after it directly, but rather as we seek to do God's will, not our own, and thus get ourselves off our hands. We grow in goodness as in true humility we know we need a goodness not our own. The old saw puts it perfectly: "Whoever thinks he's a saint, ain't." As we realize that we are not good, and start to give our lives away for love of God and man, then it is that we are on the right path. Goodness, you see, is not so much the product of great effort as it is the by-product of great commitment. Goodness and happiness in the deepest sense come to your life as day by day you dedicate it to God.

This is of real importance because many Christian people somehow have the idea that goodness

is simply a matter of keeping up their courage, sprucing up their morals and polishing up their character. They talk so glibly about the good life, implying that they already possess it, thinking that they are already good enough, and forgetting St. Paul's true and humble observation: "I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do." The problem is more profound than we think, and must be attacked at a deeper level. The citadel of self cannot easily be stormed for thus its importance may only be emphasized. Our attention must not be concentrated on the self if we would subdue it; the self must be by-passed, as it were, and starved into submission as the forces of the spirit keep marching past it to render homage at the throne of the heavenly grace.

Not primarily by trying to be good, nor by trying not to be bad, do we discover goodness; but rather by loving God and responding with grateful hearts to his grace. This is how we discover the life that is freed from tension, from disappointment and from an exaggerated sense of guilt. The person who is ill or helpless can do few, if any good works, but he can know true goodness in the Christian sense by yielding himself utterly to the divine initiative. His spirit, dedicated to God, can discover a new radiance, can be freed from bitterness and pessimism; there can flower out in the defeated body a victorious soul. The will to self-improvement cannot produce this reconciliation with God; only the complete gift of self in humility, repentance and love will reconcile us to God, and create in us truly Christian behavior, which is centered not in self but in the love of Christ.

Faith, Then Deeds

The point I am trying to make, and the point that so many Christians seem to miss, is that the man primarily concerned with the cultivation of his character is still primarily concerned with himself, and therefore his attempts at the godly life are doomed to failure, since he is preoccupied with self, not God. The evil within him must be attacked at a different point from "effort-to-improve-himself" if he hopes to conquer it; his spiritual vision must not be turned inward, but outward and upward. To be sure, there is no real repentance apart from sincere effort to obey God's will; his grace cannot operate in us when we will to sin. But the willingness to obey God must be paramount, not the dull heave of the will that wrestles with an intractable self. It is a question of priority. God wants our love and our worship, our humility and our obedience, first; after we honestly surrender to him the direction of our lives, goodness will follow. To attempt the latter before accomplishing the former is to place the well-known cart before the horse. First faith, then deeds.

Without faith in God and love for him, good works are apt to be, both to the person performing them and to the one on the receiving end, psychologically unsatisfying and spiritually arid. That is the trouble with the merely humanistic approach. Effort to lead the good life, when it springs from dedication, is wholesome; when it is produced by conscientiousness alone, it is abortive. Unless our sense of duty is rooted humbly and daily in the love of God and overshadowed by our joy in serving him it is apt to be more bane than blessing, and to bring tenseness, censoriousness, self-righteousness.

God's Grace at Work in Man

We cannot "put ourselves right with God" simply by trying to be good, for we never succeed in being good enough. This is why the whole perfectionist approach to life breaks down. We can only discover goodness as first of all we realize that we have already been discovered, and then in love go on to discover God, and by repentance, surrender and dedication allow him to put us right. Only as we bring ourselves wholeheartedly to God, confessing that we are sinners and acknowledging our proved inability to be good by our own efforts—only then will we be delivered from sin's bondage and empowered to live as free, forgiven and accepted, though still sinful, children of the Most High. The truth is that the forgiveness of the prodigal while he is still a prodigal initiates the process of his ceasing to be a prodigal. This is the grace of God at work in the life of man.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon, the great English Baptist preacher of the last century, once told of a colleague who labored in the slums. This parson went forth on his calls one day armed with money for a poor, sickly woman in his parish who, he knew, could not pay her rent and was about to be put out on the street. He climbed the long tenement stairs up to the dingy room where the poor woman lived and knocked on the door. There was no answer. He knocked again and again. The woman was there, but she refused to open to his repeated knock. When he saw her in church the next Sunday and told her of his call, she cried, "Oh, I heard your knocking, but I thought it was the man come to collect the rent."

New Life in Christ

Here is a parable of our reaction to God's call. We think he comes demanding his due, when as a matter of fact he comes offering a gift. We think the knock is that of a sheriff, when actually it is that of a Savior. We fear the summons is to pay, when instead it is to receive. Like that woman, we ignore the knock because we want to evade the responsibility. How little we trust God, how little we understand him, how ungrateful we are to him for all he gives, and would give, to us! The grace of God climbs all the wretched, rickety, dirty stairs up to the dark attic of our ingratitude and self-esteem, there to seek entrance and to bring light. How tragic that so often we fail to respond!

"The love of Christ controls us," wrote Paul, who achieved much, to be sure, but first of all, received much; his accomplishments followed his turning away from self to a new life in Christ, a life that was new because it had a new center. "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me." Paul's goodness was not the root but the fruit of his conversion. As he looked back on the process he had to admit that the true way to state the case

as not that by his own efforts he had ially discovered an elusive deity, but ther that God in Christ had found an asive Paul.

Many a person makes this mistake, ying in effect: "Go to now; I will try ard to discover God"; forgetting that od is already there—there for the ask- g, there for the yielding, there for the ving. He stands at the threshold of ir lives and knocks, waiting for our ve to open the door. He does not want to try so hard to be good that we come tense and frustrated perfection- ts. All God wants is for us to love him, r he knows that then goodness must llow as day follows night. "He who ses his life for my sake will find it!"

find, I walk, I love, but O the whole
Of love is but my answer, Lord, to Thee!
or Thou wert long beforehand with my soul;
Always Thou lovedst me.

N. B.

"YOU know," he was saying with an attractive cameraderie, "Ane-la's right. If you were accustomed to hese cases you would know this was nly one of a hundred."

"There is no case like it," said Olivia.

"Of course I haven't seen the gar- en—"

"Then you don't know what you're alking about," said Olivia.

"You are taking this far too much to eart—"

"Isn't that where we should take it?" —*Rumer Godden,* An Episode of Spar- ows *(New York: Viking Press, 1955).**

THE fear of atomic weapons is an- other source of restlessness and ack of hope. What future can they look o in that great game of hooligan chool-boys—blackmail and threat— hat the top politicians in the world lay today?

Judging by their own standard—and ow true is this judgment—they know hat weapons will be used if you carry hem with you on all occasions! What re they to believe when we older ones peak of their future? No bishop's arning on a decline in morale will hake the slightest impression on the oung if he doesn't remove that sword rom over their heads. Under the con- nuous threat of complete destruction hey feel no responsibility whatsoever. t seems hopeless to prepare for a appy future, so why trouble? I have eard many remarks of that character n my class.—*From* Journey into a Fog *y Margareta Berger-Hamerschlag, opyright 1956, Margareta Berger- Iamerschlag (published by Sheed & Vard, Inc., New York, 1956).**

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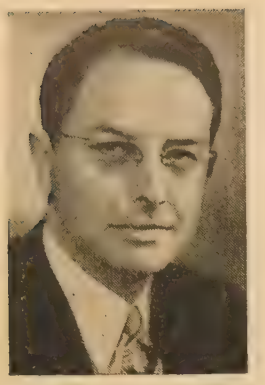

Among Us—

A Doctorate for All

By Hillyer H. Straton

ONE need not be a biblicist to point out the strange anachronism which we as modern Christians face in doing precisely what Jesus commanded us not to do. "But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brethren. And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven. Neither be called masters, for you have one master, the Christ." (Matt. 23:8-10.) Most of us have very little compunction about the matter. Our Roman Catholic friends freely call their clergy "Father." In our turn we put a premium on certain men in the Christian ministry by the appellation "Doctor" when Jesus distinctly said, "You are not to be called *rabbi.*" In those days "rabbi" was an equivalent for our term "doctor." There may be reasons for our practice but, with the definite emphasis today upon biblical theology, do not such terms seem out-of-place for a true minister of Jesus Christ?

The man in the pastorate is early faced with distinctions: Dr. Jones is on one corner, the Rev. Mr. Brown on the other. Now Dr. Jones may have gone to Podunk College and Mr. Brown been a *summa cum laude* from Harvard. The former's intellectual achievements are small but he does know his way around among his brethren, while the latter has no member in his church who happens to be a trustee of the near-by denominational college. There you have it! It probably does not concern Mr. Brown too much, but the strange thing is that it does concern many of his good people —so much so that most of them will call him "Doc" anyway. Whether or not a man has a doctor's degree makes a real difference with many a pulpit committee. I once knew a preacher who publicly said that he was made a doctor by a state religious convention in session even though no church convention has such authority. He made the remark with a certain whimsical turn but at the same time he put the degree after his name. Later in life he was given a D.D. by a small college.

Alternative Reactions

Now there are certain reactions which the Rev. Mr. Brown can have. If he is very high-minded and somewhat of a crusader he can decline all degrees with good biblical basis plus the assurance that one can "grow lesser by degrees," though if the extreme should ever happen and Oxford itself should advise him that it wished to confer an honorary, one wonders if the determination would persist.

A second alternative is to work for and earn the doctor's degree. For a man who is started in the pastorate and wishes to put his major emphasis on the parish ministry, this is a very questionable alternative. Likely he has a family with its obligations. An earned doctor's degree requires three more years of schooling, a minimum of six years' study in all above his college A.B. In most instances the earned Ph.D. or Th.D. is designed for the scholar rather than for the pastor.

The third alternative is to "pull wires," to contact interested friends in academic circles. If one happens to have a millionaire in one's congregation and can convince him that the local state college would greatly benefit by a gift of $150,000, the president of such a college of course could be advised as to the source of the original suggestion. In most cases there would be more than sufficient reason to fill out an adequate citation for the Rev. Mr. Brown's D.D. degree.

The fourth alternative of buying a degree has not been unknown in the Christian ministry. An incident with which I am acquainted concerns a man (now dead) who was really an effective Christian minister but who did not have the essential mental qualifications for an earned doctorate. Nevertheless he went to a seminary, spent the time necessary in class and even wrote a thesis. This was not up to standard and was not accepted by his professors, so consequently he did not get his Doctor of Theology degree from this school. Psychologically it did something to him that he was not man enough to take. He felt that he had put in the time, he had written a thesis, and of course in his own mind it was adequate; therefore he should have the degree. Shortly thereafter he purchased a degree from a "school" specializing in such activities. However, when he had his thesis published, in the foreword he thanked all of his professors at the seminary where he had originally done the work, leaving the impression that the degree had been secured legitimately. You say this was not ethical, and it was not, but at least one can understand.

A factor to be considered in this whole problem is that our present educational situation at both college and seminary level tends to put a premium on less effective training. If a potential minister goes to a small college, and especially if he continues his ministry in the same state, he is likely after ten or fifteen years to be "honored" with a Doctor of Divinity degree. The end product of securing a doctorate is almost guaranteed if upon completion of his college training he should go to a seminary with a policy of granting even a limited number of honorary degrees. On the other hand, if this same young man elects to attend an Ivy League college, or one of the top-flight theological schools which never, or very seldom, grant honorary doctorates, his chances of securing a doctor's degree are slight although his total effectiveness in the Christian world would be greatly enhanced by the superior training. Fortunately there are few individuals who after a decision to enter upon the life work of the Christian ministry, would figure things as carefully as this.

Sensitive men in the Christian ministry with earned or honorary doctorates, or both, are uncomfortable when they see a fellow minister as consecrated, intelligent and effective as are many who do not have such a degree.

Solution Suggested

Our seminaries have wrestled with this whole matter of degrees, yet as a pastor I doubt that they have recognized the intensity of the problem to the good man in the pulpit. One could say that there should be no distinctions, that "a man's a man for a' that." However, doctor's degrees—honorary and earned—are a part of our intellectual and clerical culture. It is tremendously difficult to change the thinking of people about them. It would be practically impossible, and probably unwise, to ask our colleges and universities to cease granting such degrees. In academic circles a man secures a Doctor of Philosophy degree after three years of study beyond his college. With the same collegiate training a man works three years for his Bachelor of Divinity degree. The major comparable profession is that of the law, where one secures a Bachelor of Laws degree for three years of work beyond his college training. This fact is often cited in defense of the bachelor's degree for the ministry. The major difference, however, is that the lawyer's standing among his fellows and with his clients has absolutely no relation to whether he by any chance possesses the Doctor of Jurisprudence degree.

What, then, is the solution? The answer, in my opinion, is to confer a doctorate upon all men for three years of work above the college level in an accredited theological school. It would be clearly understood that this is a professional degree in the same category as an M.D. The latter, while having its own standards, does not rate as a graduate degree. The doctorate for theological study would have the same general standing. As a practical matter the B.D. might be given upon graduation,

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The author: George Birmingham is the *nom de plume* of the late Dr. J. O. Hannay, canon of St. Patrick's Cathedral, (Anglican) Dublin. Much of his later life was spent in Old Testament research, to which he brought the gifts of a good story teller. $3.50

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Pulpit Post

and automatically elevated to the Doctor of Divinity after three to five years of effective service in the ministry. This would maintain the ties of the student to his seminary, it would bolster the concept of in-service training and would promote study and the desire for an effective start for a man's ministry. If the seminaries, in deference to the colleges, desire to preserve the present values of the honorary Doctor of Divinity degree, they could elevate the B.D. to the S.T.D., Doctor of Sacred Theology.

The most salutary result of all would be that as Christian ministers we would be observing the spirit involved in the admonition of Jesus "not to be called rabbi . . ."

The Man in the Gray Suit

SIR: Enslin came second in the May issue. I usually read him first—he serves as the salt for my reading of The Pulpit, as does Simeon Stylites in reading the *Christian Century*.

First place went to Tyler with "The Man in the Gray Suit." What a devastating but true statement! "The Man in the Gray Suit" has been made a lesser god by some; to others he has become the devil himself, responsible for what is happening to our city churches.

Baptist, EARVEN A. ANDERSEN.
La Grange, Ill.

SIR: I have been reading the *Century* and The Pulpit ever since H. Shelton Smith introduced me to them in my middle year in seminary. The article by Edward J. Tyler, "The Man in the Gray Suit," is in a class by itself for penetrating, incisive probing in the ulcer of ministerial complacency.

Who is Edward J. Tyler? Has he had anything published in The Pulpit before? TALMAGE MALLORY.
St. Andrews Methodist,
St. Albans, W. Va.

[*At our invitation, Mr. Tyler has submitted sermon manuscripts, and readers may look forward to finding one or more of these in coming issues of The Pulpit.—Ed.*]

His Vote—And Yours?

SIR: I appreciated having the biographical sketch of a contributor on the same page as his sermon, and I miss it now that all are gathered together on page 2. There probably are many reasons for the change. But just in case we might go back to the old arrangement, I send my vote for it.

CONRAD C. STEINBRENNER.
First Presbyterian,
Wellsburg, W. Va.

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Pulpit Calendar

June 3—2nd Sunday after Pentecost.
June 10—Children's Sunday.
June 17—4th Sunday after Pentecost.
June 24—5th Sunday after Pentecost.
July 1—Independence Sunday.
July 4—Independence Day.
July 8—7th Sunday after Pentecost.
July 15—8th Sunday after Pentecost.
July 22—9th Sunday after Pentecost.
July 29—10th Sunday after Pentecost.
Aug. 5—11th Sunday after Pentecost.
Aug. 12—12th Sunday after Pentecost.
Aug. 19—13th Sunday after Pentecost.
Aug. 26—Festival of Christ the King.

(Pulpit Calendar lists dates in the calendar of the Christian year and other observations of national or religious significance.)

he Power of Negative hinking

(Continued from page 9)

it houses in Chicago? Dispensers of etness and light accused them of ing the worm's-eye view. All could beauty, but they spurned rose- ored glasses which distort the vision. Many of the prophets of the Bible, ped in denunciation, were not given eeing the shiny side of the coin. Just en as Jeremiah, Amos and John the otist elaborate upon their surround- s.

What about our Lord? The writer of n's Gospel states that many believed Jesus' name at the time of the Pass- r, when they saw his miracles. "But us did not trust himself to them, be- se he knew all men and needed no to bear witness of man; for he him- knew what was in man." Obviously us took a dim view of these mush- m converts. His realistic response s in contrast to some of our high- vered radio and television dispensers spiritual nostrums who publicly nt their converts in the hundreds l their cures in the thousands. More- r Jesus was a disturber of the peace. exclaimed: "I have come to set a n against his father, and a daughter inst her mother." Furthermore he s far from content with what he nd in one of the Temple areas which l been changed into a cattleyard. Notice that he was always throwing ubful of cold realism over easy for- las. From the depths of man's pre- ament there comes a cry for a certain rd about life's uncertainties. At just s point the Pollyannas arrive with ir fraudulent prescriptions for fool- the gullible. Soothing syrup is of- ed to people who need not a quack t a Savior. I can find little in the New stament which advocates telling my- f that all is well, everything is just e, and I must resolve to be a little tter every day. It isn't that easy. If it re that easy, why that black moment an ugly hill outside Jerusalem? How n one be bland about that? Just try to ooth over a cross.

Of course there are some who would l relieved if the cross were removed m our faith. They are like one mem- r of a band of pilgrims to the Holy nd. All were following the road that ds from Jerusalem to Calvary. As ey walked along the *Via Dolorosa* the at was oppressive. One pilgrim felt it keenly that he raised an umbrella to otect himself from the sun. Where e had carried a cross, he carried an brella. Dare *we* substitute the way of mfort for the way of the cross?

Many of our churches are adorned the symbol of the cross. The symbol central in our houses of worship. It eets our eyes as we enter, and is be- re us as we pray. Has it become at st decorative rather than spiritually gnificant? Dare we substitute easy rmulas and shallow optimism for the ay of Calvary?

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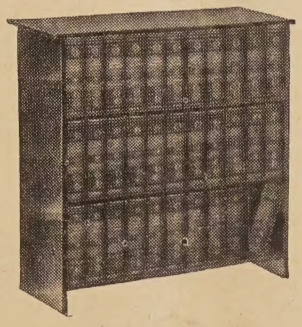

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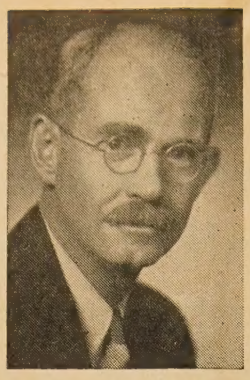

Pulpit Patter

By Morton S. Enslin

A Word Fitly Spoken

FROM time to time I have referred to letters which I have received, usually prompted by something in an earlier column. Such letters are among my choicest possessions, for often they raise questions in my own mind more perplexing than the ones they sought to set straight. An occasional letter is of a different sort. It simply suggests a question the particular writer is wrestling with. And these too are most welcome, not simply because they may serve as pump primers, but because so regularly I find my correspondent's problem is mine also.

I received such a letter a few days ago. I quote the pertinent sentences: "Now I am writing you to ask you to say something in that column . . . about the use of the word 'passion.' It is used so much, especially as Easter approaches. Here and there and everywhere we read about the 'passion of our Lord.' Now what do you suppose people understand by that? What does it mean to them? And just what is it supposed to mean? And is there another word . . . which could better be used? 'Passion'—do some of our people immediately think of 'passionate' or . . . ?"

Heard in Passing

A day or two after the letter arrived, as I was chatting with a friend and our wives were preparing a late but tasty snack, I chanced to make a reference to euthanasia. My friend's wife, who had caught the word as she was setting the table in an adjoining room, came in to ask, "Why is it that there is so much interest at the moment about youth in Asia? Several times in the past week I have heard reference to it, and always in that identical phrase."

We smiled, and the chance was of course too good to miss for indicating to her the sad result of having overlooked Greek, not only as an indispensable tool for scholarly research, but as something essential to decent literacy. (She is, I may remark in passing, a brilliant student hard at work for that pearl of especial price, the Ph.D.)

But at once I knew the theme for the next column, for her remark gave confirmation to the query raised in the letter I had just received. How easy it is to forget that terms to us almost ordinary, if not commonplace, may be entirely unintelligible to those who hear them not merely in passing but as they sit in our pews. Every profession comes to have a technical jargon, and theolog with her children is a conspicuous ex ample. Some of the concoctions are ne and horrendous, and the common-sens preacher is a bit cautious about addin them to his pulpit vocabulary. Other are more tricky. They seem perfectl clear, have been hallowed and used fo years; of course there can be no possi bility of their being misunderstood. Bu there is. And the letter from Missour evidenced it.

To the preacher with any back ground in church history and its relate mysteries the word "passion" seems very natural: the suffering of Christ on the cross, his suffering between the night of the Last Supper and his death so dreadfully clear in the lonely garden He may remember—although that is more doubtful—his work in New Testa ment and the constant references to the "passion narrative." He may even—if he lives on the wrong side of the ecclesiastical tracks—refer to the week between Palm Sunday and Easter as Passion Week, which was once quite decent usage but which is now frowned upon by the ecclesiastically proper, who insist upon Holy Week as the designation for this period of culmination and designate the preceding week, that is, the one following the fifth Sunday of Lent (Passion Sunday), as Passion Week.

But the fact remains that there are many people in our pews to whom all this background is utterly remote. To them "passion," as now used in common speech, very definitely suggests, as Mr. Schmidtke so properly remarked, "passionate," "irascible," "quick-tempered," "ready to fly off the handle." It may be that all this is but one more evidence of the ever-growing illiteracy in our land. The "letters [or queries] to the editor" in our daily papers are a most revealing index at this point and should be prescribed reading for every preacher and other public speaker.

Define and Describe

What is the preacher to do? It would certainly seem to me utterly unrealistic to expect or even to desire or hope to relegate words of this sort to the index. Rather, his task, if he feels the words veil important truth, is to make them intelligible; and that task is far from impossible. As he prepares his sermons —and pen and ink are amazingly helpful tools for achieving clarity—let the thought be constantly in his mind: Just

hat do I mean by this so easy, so na-ral, so familiar word? Is it really ear to me? Could I, if asked, define id describe it? If so, why not for a iange do just that? If not, why not let rest a bit until I can?

There are two familiar words, both ry dear to me in slightly emended rm: the one, "In a tongue under-standed of the people"; the other, "And the common people heard him gladly." I would suggest that a placard bearing them both, and placed in easy reach of the eye, is as essential in a preacher's study as is the legendary china egg in the houses of reluctant or niggardly hens who need to be encouraged to a better way of life.

Nota Bene

WE can do three things with Christ and his message. We can dismiss im as a mad Pied Piper and say that ie human experience of rescue and ansformation of life, which he has rought, is based on fantasy and illu-on. Or we can sit on the fence of gnosticism and watch him and his fol-wers, in vague wonder and indeci-on, until night falls. Then our life of reaming will have ended with, per-aps, little done to answer men's deep-st needs.

Or, in great compassion for men and omen and little children all around ie world, we can become adventurers, nd with a new realization of the un-iscovered wonder of Christ's message 've can set out with trust in him and in ove for men, to find and to be found. In orld history the great discoveries of ie spirit have come in dark and des-erate times. It is in the night that ien see the stars of eternal values, and is in storm, and across waves, that Christ finds us. It would seem clear hat the future of mankind depends on whether we travel on disastrously lone, or are wise enough to welcome Christ and his amazing message of un-iscovered realities and let him guide s, and the world we love and serve, to ndreamed of divine resources and right day.—*McEwan Lawson,* Who Was Jesus Christ? *(Greenwich: Sea-ury, 1955).**

IF you identify yourself in another, however tough the tie between you, ie cannot feel as you do, and then you o through (you who have been living our life in another) a state for which he old Japanese found a name, which hey used to describe the sadness of a arent's love: a darkness of the heart. —*C. P. Snow,* The New Men *(New ork: Scribners, 1955).**

IF we say that the world's need is beyond us, we are stating the sim-le truth. If we add that God is able o save us, we are also saying what is rue. But in saying this we must be areful and clear as to what we mean. t is tempting to assume that this re-ieves us of our desperation by reliev-ng us of our responsibility. Our faith ecomes a way of escape, not a way of riumph. God's grace is not given in that way, or on those terms. It will save us not by removing us from our conflicts; it must save us by strengthening us for them, by giving us the victory in them, not escape from them!—*David Bryn-Jones,* God's Grace and Man's Condition *(Rutland, Vt.: Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1954, $1.50).**

NO word in my vocabulary expressed deeper hatred than the word "Interference." But Christianity placed at the center what then seemed to me a transcendental Interferer. If its picture were true then no sort of "treaty with reality" could ever be possible. There was no region even in the innermost depth of one's soul (nay, there least of all) which one could surround with a barbed wire fence and guard with a notice No Admittance. And that was what I wanted; some area, however small, of which I could say to all other beings, "This is my business and mine only."—*C. S. Lewis,* Surprised by Joy *(New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1955).**

MOST of us have rather vivid recollections of revival meetings when some fiery evangelist would preach "fearlessly" against sin. In thunderous tones he talked about drinking and gambling, card-playing and profanity and all the sins of the flesh. He would tell about the terrible hell that such sinners were going to, and he would use high pressure methods to get the sinners to "hit the sawdust trail." Occasionally some sinner would be converted with blessed results, but usually such a revival left the church and the community worse off than before.

It is true that there were people who committed those sins. But they were not the only sinners. In fact they were not the worst sinners. And such preaching not only failed to save those who needed saving the most; it made them more complacent and self-satisfied. The hardest people to reach with the love of God are not the bad people. They know they are bad. They have no defense. The hardest ones to win for God are the self-righteous people.—*Charles L. Allen,* When the Heart Is Hungry *(Westwood, N.J.: Revell, 1954).**

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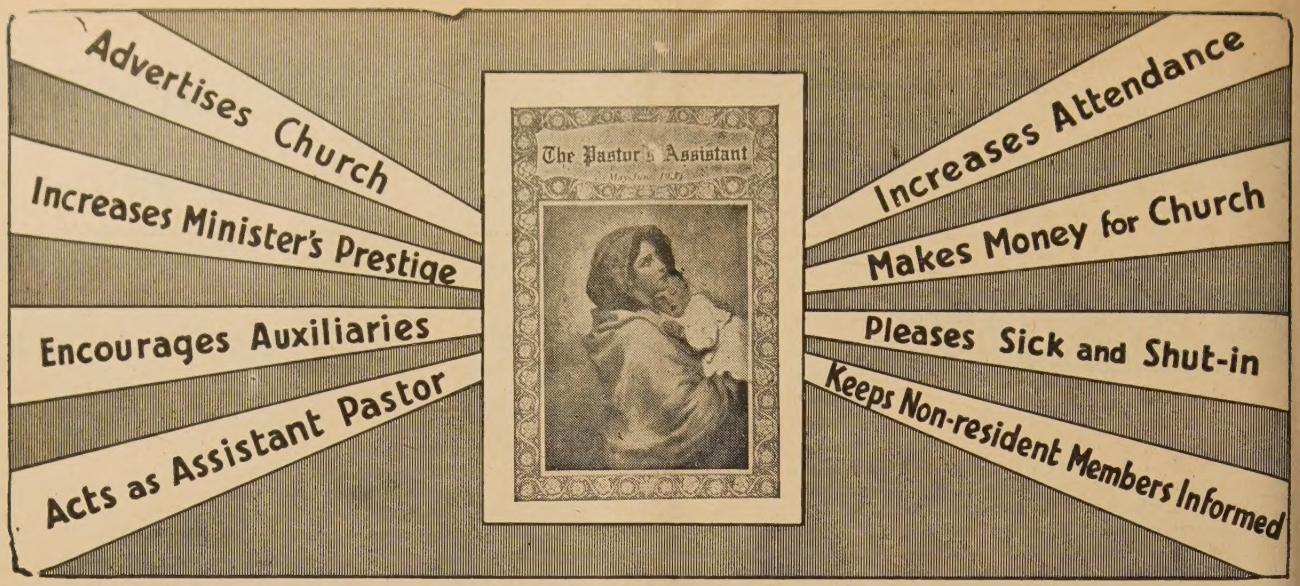

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